

Childers Tours Navistar in West Point

Congressman Discusses DoD Amendment to Promote Sustained MRAP Production, Save Jobs in North Mississippi, and Protect Our Troops

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Washington, DC – Today, U.S. Rep. Travis Childers (MS-01) toured Navistar Defense in West Point with company executives. During the tour, Childers discussed his amendment to the *National Defense Authorization Act*, which will help diminish ebbs and flows in production and hiring within defense companies that manufacture mine resistant ambush protected vehicles (MRAPs). The amendment, which will help save jobs in North Mississippi while allowing for the sustained production of protective equipment for American troops, passed in the House of Representatives in May.

“I am so proud to have Navistar here in Mississippi’s First District, and I thank its executives and employees for inviting me to tour their first-rate facility,” said Childers. “Navistar produces essential equipment to keep our soldiers safe and enable them to do their job. The company also contributes greatly to jobs and economic development in the Golden Triangle Region and throughout the state. However, MRAP manufacturers like Navistar struggle to meet DoD needs while keeping down production costs, remaining competitive, and retaining jobs. I’m pleased to have introduced an amendment to evaluate potential strategies for sustainable production, and I will continue working hard to see that this legislation is passed in the Senate and signed into law.”

“Congressman Travis Childers has been an outstanding advocate for our men and women serving overseas and has been among the strongest proponents of the MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) program,” said Dan Ustian, Chairman, President and CEO of Navistar International Corporation, the parent company of Navistar Defense. “We at Navistar are proud to have a role in helping protect our servicemen and women and we are honored to have the

Congressman at our production facility here in West Point.”

“MRAP production has had its peaks and valleys in terms of the Government’s order flow and that impacts production and employment levels at this facility in the same way,” said Archie Massicotte, president, Navistar Defense. “We continue to be grateful for the past and present support of both Congressman Taylor and Congressman Childers. Most recently, Childers’ amendment to the Defense bill, which asks the Department of Defense to evaluate a long-term strategy for vehicle production, is a thoughtful, practical approach, and one that hopefully will lead to further engagement with the Department of Defense on a long-range MRAP production and sustainment plan.”

Mississippi’s First District has experienced the negative effects of how certain defense contracts are currently implemented. Navistar was previously forced to lay off a significant number of employees. More recently, Navistar was awarded another contract requiring them to once again hire a significant number of employees in order to meet the production deadlines put in place by the military, but the majority of the employees may be laid off again when the contract is completed. The Childers Amendment will help end these cycles of layoffs and rising costs.

Specifically, the Childers Amendment requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a report 120 days after passage to evaluate potential strategies for lowering costs and increasing efficiency in the production of MRAPs. The report will also assess the potential of sustained low-level MRAP production as part of a long-term strategy to further reduce costs and save jobs.

A pro-gun, pro-life Mississippian, Congressman Travis Childers (MS-01) represents the First Congressional District in North Mississippi. He is a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and serves on the House Agriculture and Financial Services Committee. Congressman Childers co-chairs the reestablished bipartisan Congressional Rural Caucus and was appointed to the bipartisan Second Amendment Task Force. For more information, visit www.childers.house.gov

